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THE CHURCHES IN ACTION

NEWS LETTER

OF THE

UNIVERSAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL FOR LIFE AND WORK

AND THE

WORLD ALLIANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES

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LIFE AND WORK

A NEW STAGE IN THE OECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

It is at Utrecht, Holland, that a conference of representatives of the churches interested in the Oecumenical Movement will take place from May 9 to 13 next. The Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences both adopted in principle the plan for the constitution of a single oecumenical organism and entrusted a committee, known as the Committee of Fourteen, with the study of this project. The Committee of Fourteen, which met in London on August 19 last, decided upon the following procedure : First of all, consultation with the churches on the principle and the functions of the proposed official World Council of Churches, by inviting them to send representatives to Utrecht, where the foundations of this new organism would be laid, and all the necessary decisions taken for the maintenance of the essential activities of the present Universal Christian Council for Life and Work and of the World Conference on Faith and Order. Preceded by a further meeting of the Committee of Fourteen (over which the Archbishop of York will preside), the Utrecht Conference, which will be prepared by a limited committee under the direction of Dr. J. H. Oldham, will first of all consider the replies received from the churches, in order then to be able to shape in general terms the tasks which will fall to the new Council ; to consider what staff will be required, to draw up a budget and to ensure the necessary collaboration with inter-church, confessional and Christian youth organisations, all of whom form part of the Oecumenical Movement in its wider sense. (The World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, the Lutheran, Presbyterian Alliances, etc., the European Central Office for Inter-Church Aid, the international Christian Youth organisations).

To facilitate the task of the Conference, memoranda will be submitted to it on the replies received from the churches, on the work devolving upon the Faith and Order movement and upon the Research Department of the Universal Christian Council as a result of Edinburgh and Oxford, as well as on certain special problems (such as those facing the minority churches in various countries and that of mutual material aid between the churches.)

The Utrecht Conference will consist of some sixty participants. It will probably mark a decisive stage in the building up of a World Council of Churches which, when established, will meet, according to the scheme adopted in broad outline at Oxford and Edinburgh, every five years, and of a Central Committee of Churches, which will be called upon to hold annual sessions.

THE FOLLOWING-UP OF THE OXFORD CONFERENCE

We give below, in the briefest possible form, a condensed survey of the manner in which the results of the Oxford World Conference of Churches have been followed up in the oecumenical study centres of the different churches and countries, although it is not possible to indicate here at all adequately the fullness with which those results have been exploited. We would refer our readers to the International Christian Press and Information Service for regular reports on the subject.

In the first months after the conference, it was more particularly a matter of bringing out the official report in English, French and German. The English edition has been published under the title *The Churches Survey their Task* and contains, in addition to the reports of the sections, a thorough introduction to the work of the conference, together with the basic substance of the speeches delivered in plenary session.

In the last few months, moreover, the English and German editions of the *six further study books*, on the Christian conception of man, of history, of the common life, as well as on Church and State, Church, Community and State in relation to Education, and finally on the Una Sancta and the World of Nations, have been in preparation ; the English editions have in the meantime come out over the imprint of Messrs. Allen and Unwin Ltd., of London, while the German editions will appear in the course of the spring. (See further indications regarding these books in *The Churches in Action*, No. 15, p. 16.) Together with the oecumenical study book, *The Church and its Function in Society*, these volumes provide the basis for a study of the results of the Oxford Conference and for the furthering of the oecumenical discussion which has been going on for the last three or four years. In this same connection, the Russian Orthodox study book, *Kirche, Staat und Mensch* has been written, with the collaboration of scholars from other Orthodox churches, and contains special contributions on almost all the subjects mentioned above. For the further study of the problem of the State, in connection with which Professor A. Keller's, *Church and State on the European Continent*, Professor W. A. Brown's *Church and State in Contemporary America* and the oecumenical study book *Totaler Staat und christliche Freiheit* were written, mention should be made of the study book of Director N. Ehrenström which has come out in the meantime : *Christian Faith and the Modern State : An Oecumenical Approach* (S. C. M. Press, London, 6/—).

To bring the oecumenical exchange of thought provided in the reports of the sections of the conference and in the study books within the reach of wider spheres, and thus to strengthen and deepen oecumenical consciousness in all churches, right down to the individual parishes, — such has been the purpose of the study meetings of Oxford delegates which, in the different churches and countries, often with the collaboration of Edinburgh delegates, have dealt with the results so far achieved in oecumenical work, in order to clarify and point the way to the tasks of the immediate future. Systematical reporting has been carried out in the leading church and theological periodicals and in the daily press, in cases where the responsibility has not been distributed among the different collaborators. In addition, in a number of churches the necessary measures have been adopted to supply widely circulating parish periodicals with suitable articles and news on oecumenical work.

In a number of instances lectures on a larger scale have been given in the principal cities of the different countries. In various lands it has been possible to have detailed reports broadcast on the results and significance of the two conferences. Some of these talks have subsequently been printed. Within the sphere of this lecturing work special arrangements have also been made to reach the clergy in the different regions, the women's church organisations, and professional groups of jurists, pedagogists and sociologists. In some instances social and political organisations have asked for these lectures to be given. In a number of countries special oecumenical services have been held in which thousands of parish members have taken part, and at which extracts from the messages issued by the two conferences have been read. In relation to these lectures, smaller pamphlets have been issued which, after a brief and rather popular presentation of the results of Oxford and Edinburgh, deal with the meaning and task of the oecumenical movement, with a view to bringing oecumenical work to the consciousness of a wider public. Wherever an active circle of collaborators has been available for this work, it has been possible to distribute these explanatory pamphlets in thousands. Moreover in France (*Le Christianisme social*), in Holland (*Oecumenisch Christendom*) and in North America (*Christendom*), comprehensive special numbers have been issued containing articles which give impressions of Oxford and Edinburgh and the views of leading representatives of churches and of collaborators in the oecumenical study work. These periodicals have for the most part large circulations and the results of Oxford and Edinburgh are thus distri-

buted over wide spheres and the oecumenical exchange of thought extended.

In addition to a particularly detailed treatment of the results of Oxford and Edinburgh in special volumes of this kind, systematic reviewing of oecumenical literature has been arranged. Either the individual volumes are dealt with in detail within the framework of the whole oecumenical and theological debate, or comprehensive surveys are made in the form of longer, introductory articles on the principal oecumenical study books as a whole, in order to facilitate the extension of the study groups which are at work on these subjects.

With a view to the furthering of the oecumenical literature, "oecumenical book weeks" have been undertaken in different countries, in order, with the collaboration of the central organisations of publishers and booksellers, to draw wider circles of people into the oecumenical debate which has arisen out of the two conferences. The translation of the results of both meetings into the various languages is also serving this purpose. A Dutch edition of the reports of the sections of Oxford has appeared, for instance, together with the results of Edinburgh, and a similar publication is in preparation in Sweden. In Czechoslovakia and in Roumania the translations of these reports are to be issued serially in the main theological and church periodicals.

The foundations have thus been laid in the most varied ways possible for a critical approach to the results of Oxford and Edinburgh, with a view to securing proposals and suggestions for the further organisation of oecumenical work. In addition to the groups of collaborators in oecumenical study and research work which already exist, study circles are also being formed in a number of countries within the theological faculties and preaching seminaries, and in some instances in the juristic and pedagogical seminaries. In order to carry the collaboration in this group study work more generally into the individual parish communities, six study booklets have already been prepared in North America, containing study plans and proposals for work in groups, and making use of the five sectional reports of Oxford and of the study book *The Church and its Function in Society*. In all these undertakings it has been regarded as a special task to form, to an increasing extent, groups of lay people, whom it is becoming more and more possible to draw into this far-reaching spiritual discussion. In certain churches and countries plans are already in hand for the holding of oecumenical study conferences on specially urgent questions and tasks. In Holland, for exemple, a conference will deal with the question of the Una Sancta and the world of nations, in relation to which the Christian attitude to the international rule of law and to the war and peace problem occupies a central position.

In a number of countries specially careful preparations have been made to present the findings of Oxford in the most suitable manner possible in the official church bodies, and especially in the church synods, and to form everywhere permanent oecumenical committees of official church authorities. Where such committees do not already exist, steps are taken to bring them into being. In this way it is hoped to secure the participation of the churches in all the study work which has been embarked upon and which will come specially to a head at the conference to be held in Utrecht next May.

MONSIEUR FRÉDÉRIC DOMINICÉ

As we despatch our material to the printer, we learn of the sudden death, at the age of seventy, of Monsieur Frédéric Dominicé, treasurer of the Universal Christian Council since 1932. Monsieur Dominicé was a financier highly esteemed in Geneva, where he occupied a prominent position in the business world. He was a distinguished and devoted citizen in everything that concerned the city and its international life and he showed a keen and enlightened interest in the life of the Protestant Church and in public works. To the Universal Christian Council he was an invaluable counsellor and a generous friend to whom we pay grateful homage.

WORLD ALLIANCE

THE GOODWILL CONGRESS

The American Council of the World Alliance joined with the Church Peace Union in the arrangements and programme for the twenty-second annual congress which took place in Boston over Armistice Week. The sessions were held at a time of tremendous tension in the international life of the world. Perhaps no more confused and difficult moment in which to promote the cause of peace has occurred in modern history. Peace was declared to be a great idea in search of a technique. But notwithstanding the difficulty of the moment, the success of the congress was revealed in the interest that it aroused in the public mind, the attention given

to it by the press and in the attendance at the various functions. A sponsoring committee of two hundred representative New England men and women, under the leadership of Dr. Samuel A. Eliot, gave enthusiastic cooperation. The churches, colleges, theological institutions and service clubs opened their doors to the discussion of peace from every angle, as presented by the visiting speakers. The Armistice Eve banquet was a brilliant and remarkable occasion, attended by a thousand people and addressed by speakers who made the programme a distinguished one in every way. Viscount Cecil of Chelwood crossed the Atlantic to be the special guest. Messages of greeting from the Prime Minister and Air Minister of France, as well as from the Archbishop of Paris, were read by Madame Malaterre-Sallier, who has represented France so often at the League of Nations in Geneva. The other two speakers were the Honourable C. T. Wang, Chinese Ambassador to the United States, and Senator James P. Pope. This gathering was perhaps a little too over-weighted by the urgency of the situation in the Far East to emphasize, as many would have liked, the distinctively Christian contribution in the emergency of the moment. To many people today war seems inevitable and impossible to avert. But the church after all exists to do the impossible thing. It is not necessary to win, but to maintain the faith, to witness to the truth, and to declare that after all peace, fellowship and goodwill are the imperative will of God.

The ministers' meeting, one of the most largely attended of recent years, indicated with what keen interest all denominations are following the peace struggle. The youth meeting, one of the most attractive features of this annual gathering, was attended by six hundred young people representing all the youth groups of the area. Here three addresses were delivered, followed by a challenge to local action by one of the youth leaders.

During one luncheon hour five Round Tables were held, under the leadership of experts in international relations problems. The subjects of these discussions indicate the issues uppermost in the minds of the American people : America and the Far Eastern Situation ; Building the World Community ; World Disarmament and National Defence Needs ; Economic Adjustments and Trade Agreements ; The Problem of Neutrality. These groups merged into a panel discussion, when each leader made his report, and then the entire conference focused on how these conclusions could be made articulate through the local church. Unquestionably, there is a growing conviction in America that the peace cause, to be effective, must get down to the establishment of a peace committee in every church, with a definite programme of education and action.

There were two gatherings at which the contribution of religion to world peace was stressed, and then came the final address of the congress, delivered just after the eleven o'clock silence on Armistice Day by the President of the World Alliance, the Right Reverend G. Ashton Oldham who, incidentally, was unanimously re-elected to office for another year.

The resolutions and message of the convention, which now become the working programme of the American Council of the World Alliance, refer to the Far Eastern situation and pledge the support of the Alliance to the United States Government in its effort to check aggression and establish lasting peace. They urge a review of the present American Neutrality Law and a more serious cooperation with other governments in the direction of limitation of armaments ; appeal for another world conference to discuss the whole problem of economic justice and close with the declaration that the World Alliance must by its charter place its chief stress on friendship and understanding. The peace machinery will creak and dismally fail unless infused by the spirit of goodwill. It is only the churches that can provide the spiritual dynamic equal to the colossal task of converting the world.

The Congress appraised the situation fearlessly and took heart to move on with courage, sustained by the conviction that this cause belongs to God.

Harry N. Holmes.

A CHRISTIAN PEACE MISSION TO EASTERN EUROPE

by the Rev. Henry Carter, C. B. E.

The most recent peace mission of Embassies of Reconciliation was to Czechoslovakia, Poland and Austria. Embassies of Reconciliation is the inter-church and international group formed in 1936 to carry the Christian witness for peace, and proposals for pacific settlements, to points of greatest international tension. The earlier Embassies, led by the Right Hon. George Lansbury, M. P., were to the leading statesmen of France, Belgium, the Scandinavian countries, Germany and Italy. In view of the increasing tension in Eastern Europe an Embassy was prepared to visit Prague, Warsaw and Vienna. The delegation on this journey numbered three : Mr. Lansbury, myself and Mr. Percy Bartlett (Secretary of Embassies of Reconciliation). The three capitals were visited in late December.

Arrangements made by the courtesy of the Polish Embassy and the Czechoslovakian and

Austrian Legations in London clearly defined our objectives. We were to see the Presidents, Premiers and Foreign Secretaries of these countries, and discuss with them their European relationships. All these engagements were fulfilled, and to the official interviews we were able to add a Press Conference in each city, and numerous conversations with M. P.'s and social workers. I met also, by appointment, Methodist ministers in all three cities. In these ways we touched many different elements in the life of the nations, and were able to learn the views of various sections of national thought and experience, and bear our testimony to a wide public.

We returned to England with the clear conviction that there is a practicable policy by which the drift towards war could be checked, and a hopeful and happier future opened before the European nations. What we desire to advocate is concentration by the governments on joint action to raise the standard of living for the peoples, and that they should attempt this on a scale adequate to the existent need. In view of our conversations with responsible statesmen in Central and South-Eastern Europe, we are able to affirm that, in their judgment, international co-operation to grapple with the deepening poverty of millions of working and workless people is the road away from war.

Three reasons, at least, point directly to this conclusion.

First, this policy makes reckoning with the basal fact, the need for daily bread. Europe is hungry in vast stretches of its domain. The brightly-lit streets of the great cities are deceptive. Colossal expenditures on armaments ultimately mean for the masses less to eat and wear. In 1937 the world spent seven million pounds per day on armaments. Few countries can afford both guns and butter. The truth is that half-starvation is the lot of multitudes of the peasantry, the manual and clerical workers, and the workless in many European countries. Ministers of State know this. They know that the present pace of war-expenditure cannot be indefinitely maintained ; that the pressure on the rank-and-file may reach breaking-point ; that in desperation war may be the gambler's throw of some ruler hard beset ; and that the house of Europe might perish in the ensuing fury. But let the governments together recognise and wrestle with their common problem, the welfare of the worker and his family, and co-operation instead of conflict will become the goal.

Secondly, international economic collaboration to achieve advance in the general standard of living carries with it a lessening of tension between nation and nation. In the economic sphere Europe has been at war for years past, with tariffs and quotas and currencies as weapons, whether of offence or defence it would be difficult to say. The folly of it has been apparent in the shrinkage of world trade, the wrong of it in restraining the supply of necessary goods to the under-nourished multitudes. Only joint action by the governments can reverse the process.

In the third place, this policy of international co-operation offers the world a commanding objective, an alternative to concentration on war-preparations. The efforts of statesmen to reduce friction at points of obvious peril — at Danzig or the Czechoslovakian frontier or elsewhere — must continue, lest the fatal clash should come ; but the avoidance of an actual clash leaves unresolved those tensions which quicken the race in armaments. We felt in each country we visited that what is needed is a new way of thinking and acting that can enlist the interest and service of governments holding diverse and opposing policies. If nations begin to work together on that problem they may find that the road to its solution is also the road to the solution of other difficulties which vex, embitter and divide them.

In all three countries the forthcoming Report of Monsieur Van Zeeland, the Belgian Prime Minister, on world economic policy, was being eagerly awaited, and will be closely and sympathetically studied by the statesmen we met. If its proposals provide a starting-point for international co-operation, and if, being so, they are upheld unselfishly by the strongest Powers, a brighter era may open. Along the line of the Danube the Hodza or Czechoslovakian Plan has prepared the way for wider economic agreement in South-Eastern Europe. The Scandinavian countries, Holland and Belgium are already committed to a policy of freer trade. The movement of thought in the United States towards broadening and deepening the channels of world trade is know to all. But these trends and endeavours are partial. What is needed is a unifying initiative. We heard and felt in our journeys in Eastern Europe that its peoples are looking for the lead of one or more of the Great Powers. The responsibility resting in this hour on the countries that are willing to be known as Christian is very great indeed.

NEWS FROM NATIONAL COUNCILS

Little news has come in of the activities of the national councils of the Alliance during the last two months of 1937 and the early weeks of 1938. We hear, however, that Peace Sunday (the first or second Sunday in Advent), has been celebrated in several countries with large congregations,

generally inter-ecclesiastic, as was the case in Holland, where, we are informed, "the great cathedral of Utrecht was crowded to the doors. No oecumenical service held in previous years has been so representative or has drawn such a large assembly. The liturgical part of the service was conducted by a priest of the Old-Catholic Church and a pastor of the Remonstrantsche Kerk. An appeal from the Dutch council of the Alliance was read from the pulpit, summarising the messages of the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences. Two sermons were delivered, on the service of the Church and on Christian Unity."

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was held from January 18 to 25, in England, (where it originated in 1909), in several countries of Europe and in America, uniting in prayer Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant churchmen, to the number of several tens of thousands.

In *Austria*, on the occasion of Peace Sunday, an appeal was addressed to all pastors of the country by the World Alliance national council : "The supreme and sacred task of the Church", it reads, "irrespective of changing world conditions, is to bring the message of the salvation of God..." It declares that "true Christianity manifests itself in practical activity which demands and produces justice, upholds peace between classes and nations and seeks to dispel hatred and distrust." The message ends with the following significant warning in the face of the totalitarian claims in favour at the present time : "Before its responsibility for the future of the nations, the Church of Christ lifts up its eyes unto its master, in the absolute conviction of final victory, for he alone is lord of lords and king of kings."

Bishop Axel Rosendal has succeeded the late Bishop Ammundsen as President of the Alliance in *Denmark*. The Government has authorised the Danish Churches to make an annual collection in the churches in favour of the oecumenical movement. The young people are actively at work in the preparation of the World Christian Youth Conference planned for 1939 and a good many of them are taking part in the essay competition on "Christ and World Friendship."

In *Estonia*, the national council, which met on November 18 under the chairmanship of Bishop Rahamaigi, revised its constitution and decided to seek the collaboration of the Methodist and Baptist churches.

In the *United States*, World Alliance activity has been more particularly concentrated on the Boston Congress reported on above.

Visits. Canada has been visited by *Dr. Atkinson*. *Mr. Espy* has been on an extensive tour in North America on behalf of the Youth Commission. *Pastor Jézéquel* spent two weeks in Governmental Spain in November and visited, during the bombardments, the majority of the Protestant communities of Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, carrying the message of the Gospel, that war does not prevent the faithful coming together before God. Services are held, he tells us, regularly, even, as in Madrid, near the scene of action, where the sermon "is punctuated by artillery and machine gun fire."

The journey which *Professor Siegmund-Schultze* was to have undertaken in the autumn in Eastern Europe has been postponed, on account of the grave difficulties which several Evangelical Churches in Poland are encountering in their relations with the civil authorities.

The General Secretary, *Pastor Henriod*, visited in October and November Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, to discuss with the national councils of those countries the plans for an evangelisation campaign which is in view for the autumn of 1938. He visited the national councils of Roumania and Bulgaria, in company with Professor Zankow, International Secretary for the Orthodox countries, and also went to Yugoslavia. In November and December he visited Paris and London and took part in Utrecht in a meeting of the Dutch national council.

From many of these visits an impression has been gained, in the social and political sphere, of insecurity, anxiety and, perhaps most of all, of an even greater stiffening of opposition from the extreme tendencies in the face of which the Church, even though pushed aside, strangled or hampered in its vital freedom, must bear unhesitating witness.

The services which the Preaching Mission is continuing to render in the United States, and those which the more modest evangelisation campaign is hoping to render in Central Europe, where the plan is meeting with a real response, reveal the necessity for driving still deeper the furrow where the seed of international peace, born of faith and obedience to God, may bear fruit.

The Executive Committee of the Alliance, which met in London in the middle of December to plan the triennial meeting of the International Council which will take place in Norway from August 23 to 30 next, kept the same task in view. Four important subjects for study are to be included in the programme : the national and supra-national character of the Church of Christ ; the Christian message of peace : the ways to peace ; refugees and stateless persons.

The International Council meeting will be preceded by a smaller, two-day conference summoned by the Minorities Commission of the Alliance.

GENERAL NEWS ITEMS

PROFESSOR FRANK ABAUZIT

International conferences exact important and delicate work from the experts entrusted not only with the translation of memoranda and resolutions, but with their interpretation according to the genius of the language of the text required. In connection with a good deal of the translation work which preceded the Oxford Conference, and with the innumerable texts which were produced day after day, Professor Frank Abauzit placed wholeheartedly at the service of the oecumenical movement his wide knowledge and his exceptional gifts as a translator. A Frenchman and a resident of Thonon, Professor Abauzit had been since 1914 a lecturer in the Faculty of Letters of Geneva University. A Christian philosopher deeply versed in Greek thought and a great admirer of Plato, he had published several original works which reached a high level of thought and faith. He achieved world recognition with his French edition of "The Religious Experience of William James", a real masterpiece in which the translator succeeded in recreating the author's process of mind. Professor Abauzit was taken from his family and his numerous friends on January 24, after a few days' illness, leaving among those who knew him the memory of a fine intelligence, an infectious enthusiasm, an unswerving devotion and modesty which were an example to all who came in contact with him.

FAITH AND ORDER

Following the Edinburgh Conference there is a pause in the direct activity of the Movement. But it is a pause in appearance only. Although for the moment there may be no commissions at work preparing material for discussion in conference, news is coming from all over the world of the work which delegates to Edinburgh are doing to bring its message home to their own fellow-churchmen. In and through them the movement continues to move.

The English edition of the Edinburgh Report was ready in September. By the end of 1937 more than 7,000 copies had been sent out from the Winchester office and the New York office had printed an edition of its own for circulation in America. The French edition was ready in January 1938, and it is hoped that the issue of the German will not now be long delayed.

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The first task of the secretariat after the conference was officially to submit the Report to the churches. This has now been done in the case of all churches except those to whom the Report will be sent in German. Already many acknowledgments have been received, with promises to bring the Report before the appropriate bodies.

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It so happened that the triennial General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U. S. A. was due to meet in October 1937. Although this was too early to allow of the Edinburgh Report being considered as a whole, opportunity was given for delegates from both Oxford and Edinburgh to make personal reports, and official cognisance was taken of the proposal to establish a World Council of Churches. The Convention endorsed the proposed World Council under the provisions set down by the Edinburgh Conference, and the Church's Commission on Faith and Order was re-appointed, and will examine the remainder of the Edinburgh Report on behalf of the Church.

The General Convention also passed the following resolution which deserves record here as a step forward along the road :

> Be it resolved, that the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, acting with full realisation of the significance of its proposal, hereby invites the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America to join with it in accepting the following declaration :
>
> The two Churches, one in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, recognising the Holy Scripture as the supreme rule of faith, accepting the two sacraments ordained by Christ, and believing that the visible unity of Christian Churches is the will of God, hereby formally declare their purpose to achieve organic union between the respective Churches.
>
> Upon the basis of these agreements, the two Churches agree to take immediate steps toward the framing of plans whereby this end may be achieved.
>
> Be it further resolved that the Presiding Bishop be and hereby is requested to convey this invitation to the authorities of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

In this connection, notice should also be taken of the movement towards unity among the American Methodist churches. Both the Methodist Episcopal and the Methodist Protestant churches have completed the vote both by annual and general conferences in their borders, and have secured the necessary majorities of three-fourths and two-thirds. In the Methodist Episcopal Church South the aggregate result of voting in the annual conferences is now 7,577 in favour of uniting with the other two bodies and 1,247 against. It is confidently hoped that the remaining annual conferences will increase this majority, and that the necessary majority of two-thirds will be secured at the Southern General Conference this April. If all goes well, the first General Conference of the united Methodist Church may be looked for in 1940.

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Besides these official activities of churches, readers of *The Churches in Action* should know of the work which is being done by the Faith and Order Regional Committee, in the state of Victoria, Australia and by the Fellowship of Unity in Egypt. The former body holds regular meetings of members of different churches for discussion on "Faith and Order" lines, and has circulated valuable collections of papers presented to these gatherings. For many years the Egyptian Fellowship of Unity has held an annual service of united worship, and in other ways has drawn together the Christian Churches in that country. Recently it printed for private circulation a historical survey of the divisions of Christendom which was seen to be so valuable that it has now been published for sale to the general public by the Student Christian Movement Press, London, with the title *The Divisions of the Church : A Historical Guide*, edited by E. G. Parry (price 1/—). The same publishers have also issued at 2/— *Edinburgh 1937*, a popular account of the Edinburgh Conference by the Rev. Hugh Martin.

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The full official record of proceedings at Edinburgh is being compiled by Canon Hodgson. Its publication has been delayed by his illness before Christmas, but it is now hoped to have it ready by this summer. The Continuation Committee is to meet at the end of August to make plans for the future work of the movement. All the indications seem to show that the next step will be joint study of the doctrine of the Church.

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After March 31 Canon Hodgson's address will be Christ Church, Oxford, England (instead of Cheyney Court, Winchester). All communications for the European Secretariat of Faith and Order which will reach him after that date should be sent to the new address.

WORLD MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL

Madras, December 13-30, 1938.

The International Missionary Council had made all plans for the holding of a world meeting, in succession to that held in 1928 at Jerusalem, in Hangchow, China, in the autumn of 1938. The distressing situation in the Far East made it impossible to hold a meeting in China, and after long discussion and taking of counsel with leaders in many countries, a decision was arrived at that the meeting should still be held in 1938, the place changed to India and the date moved for local reasons to the month of December. The place of meeting is to be the new buildings of the Madras Christian College, which are just outside the city of Madras.

The officers of the International Missionary Council were naturally so conscious of the gravity of the Far Eastern situation that they were very reluctant to take action which might appear to argue a lack of appreciation of the terrible facts which confront the churches in the Far East. Nevertheless, a study of the world situation made it plain that it was necessary to go forward. The argument which had greatest weight in the making of the final decision was simply this : that the situation throughout the world makes it in a high degree necessary that leaders of the Christian churches should come together to plan, to take stock of the situation which confronts them, and to listen for the voice of God speaking to them in these concrete realities.

The central theme of the whole meeting is to be the upbuilding of the Church in the world in living continuity with the historic Christian fellowship. This central theme is divided into five subheads, each dealt with by a group of delegates, each group being formed from different countries. These sixteen subjects are as follows :

I. The Faith by which the Church Lives.
   1. The Faith.
   2. The Church : its nature and function.

II. The Witness of the Church.
   3. The unfinished evangelistic task of the universal Church.
   4. The place of the Church in Evangelism.

5. The witness of the Church in relation to the non-Christian faiths, the new paganisms and the cultural heritage of the nations.
6. Practical questions of method and policy.

III. The Life of the Church.

7. The inner life of the Church, worship, the Christian home, religious education.
8. The indigenous ministry of the Church, both ordained and lay.
9. The relationship of Christian educational, medical and social (including rural reconstruction) work to the Christian missionary purpose.
10. The place, work and training of the future missionary.
11. An adequate Christian Literature programme.

IV. The Church and its Environment.

12. The economic basis of the Church.
13. The Church and the changing social and economic order.
14. The Church and the International Order.
15. The Problem of Church and State.

V. 16. Cooperation and Unity.

A great deal of preparation is being done in virtually all countries. It has been necessarily difficult for the Christian Councils of China and Japan to continue the preparations which they had undertaken, though every effort is being made to do what is possible. In India a great deal of preparatory material has been published, and is being studied by groups in all parts of the country. Special efforts are being made to adapt the main themes to the conditions of Africa and to secure study and discussion there. The same is true of the Dutch Indies and Latin America as well as of the European countries, North America and Great Britain.

Dr. H. Kraemer of Java and the University of Leiden has written a book entitled "The Christian Message to a non-Christian World", which will be published shortly and contains a thorough and extraordinarily able discussion of the whole problem of evangelization in relation to the religions of the East and the total world situation. A book will be published in August containing the results of studies in evangelistic work in many parts of the world, and at the same time another volume gathering up studies in the economic aspect of the life of the growing churches. In addition to these special studies, every effort is being made to relate the findings and work of the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences to the different but related conditions of the younger churches.

William Paton.

YOUTH COMMISSION

At a meeting in London on February 4 and 5 the Oecumenical Youth Commission laid further plans for the participation of the representatives of the youth work of the Churches throughout the world in the World Conference of Christian Youth being held in Amsterdam, Holland, in the summer of 1939. The sessions reflected an enlarging interest on the part of the younger generation in many countries and churches in the total work of the Oecumenical Movement and a desire to collaborate more effectively through the opportunity provided by the preparations for the Amsterdam Conference, and other undertakings of the Youth Commission.

During the next months two meetings in particular will serve to bring together for further fellowship and exchange of view younger leaders in the youth work of the Churches. From April 20 to 24 there will be held in Bratislava at the invitation of the Lutheran Slovakian Church a Regional Conference for Central Europe to embrace delegates from the Protestant Church youth groups of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Roumania and Yugoslavia. The theme of this Conference will be : "The Christian principle of justice and love in the world of today".

From August 30 to September 4 the Youth Commission will hold near Oslo its Annual International Conference bringing together younger youth leaders from many of the countries of the world. Following immediately upon the International Council Meeting of the World Alliance in Larvik, this Conference will draw upon the World Alliance gathering for some of its leadership and a number of the members of the Youth Conference will also attend the Larvik meeting. It is planned that the first day of the Youth Conference should be combined with the final day of the meeting of the International Council for the closing observances and the official reception in Oslo of the delegates to the senior meeting. The Conference will have as its theme the meaning of oecumenism for youth in faith and in action.

The Youth Commission is conducting for the third two-year period the Essay Competition on the subject "Christ and World Friendship" established by the Zelah van Loan World Friendship Award. Any individuals or groups who have not received notice of the Competition may secure information through the Youth Commission.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Congar, le Rév.-Père M. J. : *Chrétiens Désunis. Principes d'un Œcuménisme catholique.* 1937. Les éditions du Cerf, Paris. 403 pages.

It would be hard to exaggerate either the value or the importance of this study of the problem of disunited Christendom. It is equally hard, through the channel of mere words, to convey any adequate idea of the depths which the writer sounds in sympathy, charity, and understanding. He strikes, moreover, from the outset, a note of shame for the effort that has not been made, for the passage of time that has allowed estrangement to become a habit hard to break.

The 'dissident' churches are considered here in full relation to the causes, other than doctrinal, which are seen to have contributed to their schism from Rome. European Protestantism emerges, under this treatment, as grounding itself more absolutely on doctrinal principle than is the case for Orthodoxy and Anglicanism, where considerations of a geographical, political and temperamental nature are presented as having played a larger part. The strength and the weakness, in the Catholic view, of these two confessions receive detailed examination. Fr. Congar deplores the differences of belief allowed among holders of authority in the Church of England over fundamental doctrines. He finds its greatest homogeneity in the Anglo-Catholic quarter and its greatest strength in the stress that it lays on the Incarnation and in its sense of the apostolic tradition. He values the Malines Conversations for the precision which they gave to points both of agreement and of contention and for the positive character with which they endued the Catholic Church in the eyes of the Anglican participants.

The breach with Rome is shown to be at its narrowest and most reparable point in relation to Orthodoxy. But while recognising at its full value the mystical element which forms the special genius of Orthodoxy, Fr. Congar finds it, in its readiness to put up with material suffering and its tendency to withdraw from social action, not militant enough and lacking in a vital practical initiative. It is, though, his grasp of this same characteristic that enables him to see, from the Orthodox viewpoint, why Catholicism on its actively administrative side, should seem to err in the other direction. In reply, Fr. Congar emphasises the double logic of the Catholic Church as a spiritual communion and a visible, organic body, ant it is on the basis of all that this implies in comprehensiveness that he approaches the problem of reunion. For its solution is set forth here in terms of a conception of the plenitude of the Catholic Church. Willingness to discover what elements of Catholicism, detached from the main body, have survived among dissident Christians in no way affects an uncompromising presentation of Catholicism as *the* Church in which all individual Christians whom the sacrament of Baptism has started on the Catholic way of life will find the fullness of expression which their present loyalties curtail.

This fullness of the Catholic Church, moreover, is presented as something ever growing and still baulked of its completion while whole spheres of naturally differentiated elements, the Slav, the Nordic, for instance, each with something especially its own to contribute to Catholicism, remain for the most part outside and deprive it of its full capacity of expression. It is in urging reunion as the realisation of this fullness in Christ, through the reintegration of those Catholic elements which have broken loose, that Fr. Congar endeavours to dispose of the idea of surrender of principles on the one side and of triumph on the other. He appeals to the non-Catholic to get rid of his prejudices and to consider whether many of his objections are not based on a "scarecrow" of his own making. He appeals to the Catholic to overcome the hardness, the aloofness which have come to characterise his attitude in the matter and to admit, while always refusing to compromise, that there is room for reform, if the dissident churches are really to discover in Catholicism the plenitude for which it claims to stand.

This is a book which dispels a great deal of ignorance on both sides. It goes a long way to break down existing tensions and to contribute to the creation of a more assimilative mind, a deepened sense of common Christian faith. And that may well turn out, on the human side, to be all that can be done : to help create an enhanced sense of a common heritage and a spiritual preparedness to recognise the channels through which, in God's own time, reunion may come.

Visser't Hooft, W. A. *None Other Gods.* Student Christian Movement Press, London, 1937. 188 pages. 5/- net.

The minority position into which the Christian Church is driven in many quarters places it at the same time in one of conspicuous isolation. In the glaring light of criticism, if not of actual persecution, unique opportunities occur for witness, but defects and weaknesses show up in all their clarity. And it is then that the challenge sounds for the Church to reconsider her values and to distinguish clearly between what is of the essence of her faith and what is extraneous and even a hindrance to it.

Such a challenge Dr. Visser't Hooft presents in no uncertain terms, calling for a rejection of everything that obscures the basic principles of the faith and for a re-thinking of all that those principles imply in every situation. He questions in particular formalised piety and standardised religious practices, seeing in them a dulling effect on spiritual alertness, and some justification for their condemnation as an "opiate". He appeals for a reform of personal religion, that it may become more personal in the degree of responsibility with which each individual Christian thinks his obligations consistently through, less personal through the development of an increased sense of a community which has its centre of gravity in Christ. This book breaks vividly through to the vast possibilities inherent in a shedding of habit and routine in religious thinking and practice, and of adventuring into an increased awareness of the central fact of God.

In the face of mass ideologies, Dr. Visser't Hooft preaches a mass response, from a Christian community of people who are really training themselves to think and act together and to distinguish together between "what is of God and what is not", united in self-commitment to God through prayer and the study of the Bible. He urges a keener appreciation and contemplation of the full purpose of the Incarnation,

and of the fact that it is the daily round in which the Gospel events took place which provides the clue to the direction in which divine revelation must still be sought. Not to get over-accustomed to the Christian story, not to take it for granted, to make a new approach in Bible study, possibly through the stimulus of a foreign language, or of a modern, non-traditional translation, such are among the ideas and suggestions to awaken a very general response. But the book is specially to be recommended to the younger Christian thinker, who provides something of an analogy here with the younger mind in scientific research, which often arrives more directly and more swiftly at the truth through the very fact of freedom from over-familiarity with established conceptions.

The book is addressed primarily to students, and presents in particular a reminder of the universities' responsibility to preserve their freedom to search for and stand by the truth, and to form a thinking, intellectual bodyguard that will place itself at the service of the Church of Christ.

Fenn, Eric: *That They Go Forward.* An Impression of the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State. S. C. M. Press, London. 1938. 2/- net. 102 pages.

The author of this little volume played a large part in the preparation and following-up of the Oxford Conference, as well as in its actual organisation. Mr. Fenn's first-hand knowledge of the problems studied, his intellectual gifts, served by an able pen, his long experience in student work, all fit him in an exceptional manner to interpret to "mature youth" the results of the Oxford conference.

Five of the eight chapters of this book give the pith of the reports of the five sections of the conference, while a sixth chapter, entitled "Army or Rabble" summarises the preparatory volume *The Church and its Function in Society.* These chapters are preceded by a vivid description of the service held in St-Paul's Cathedral, and of the whole setting and raison d'être of the conference, and are followed by a concluding challenge which gives the title of the book.

Written for the constituency to be summoned to a Christian world youth conference in 1939, *That They Go Forward* cannot fail to interest old and young in other spheres as well, in the great common experience of the churches of the world assembled at Oxford last summer.

Christian Unity. A Bibliography, by A. Senaud, World's Committee of Y. M. C. A.'s. Geneva, 1937. Cloth boards Fr. 8.-, Bound, Fr. 9.50.

At a time when questions connected with the further organisation and shaping of oecumenical work are involving a widespread examination of the roots and foundations, the nature and tasks of the oecumenical movement, the publication of this bibliography, with the survey that it provides of the basic literature related to the oecumenical movement and its activity, meets an ever growing need. The author has restricted himself in this first edition to a general compilation of two thousand contributions and books, chosen from a larger bibliography of seven thousand titles, and including the essential literature published since 1850. In addition to literature on the historical development and fundamental questions of the oecumenical movement and its work, indications are given regarding the official documents of the churches which come into this category. A further section contains a well compiled survey of the literature concerning the oecumenical organisations of the churches and the Christian youth federations, and on the publications connected therewith. A third section is devoted to the principal periodicals which serve the oecumenical movement and its task. The introductory contribution of Professor A. Keller on the significance and responsibility of the oecumenical movement, as well as that of the author on the place of the movement in the history of the endeavours being made in search of Christian unity, supply a helpful guide in the use of this bibliographical work.

Le Christianisme Social. Septembre-Décembre 1937. (Les Conférences Oecuméniques d'Oxford et d'Edimbourg). Edited by Pastor E. Gounelle, rue des Ecoles, Ganges, Hérault, France. 411 pages. Price Fr. fr. 15. (Abroad, Fr. 18).

Just as he did after the Stockholm Conference in 1925, the director of *Le Christianisme Social*, Pastor Elie Gounelle, has devoted to the great oecumenical meetings of last summer an important and intensely interesting number of the review which, without any duplication, very satisfactorily supplements the official report of the Oxford Conference and provides valuable documentation on the work accomplished at Edinburgh. After an excellent editorial, the number opens with a clear survey by Pastor Marc Boegner of the tasks with which the oecumenical movement will have to concern itself in the future. Professor H. Clavier then describes, with skill and humour, the main phases of these two conferences, and Pastor Gounelle, who was himself one of the inspirers and workers of the Stockholm Movement from the outset, gives his main impressions, both as to the results achieved and as to reservations to be made. Separate sections devoted to the respective conferences give in detail the opening speeches and the principal messages, impressions of the conferences as a whole and of the work of their various sections ; also included are the impressions of youth delegates, some anxious reflections of an Orthodox churchman (Professor Zander) and a survey of future prospects.

In this volume the two conferences are handled with a wealth of understanding, with immense frankness and appreciation of all the labour that went to secure the results obtained. Constructively critical, the review shows up in all its gravity the solemn task entrusted to the Christian churches, a task for which all its members are responsible.

Harder, Hans : *Das Dorf an der Wolga. Ein deutsches Leben in Russland.* (The Village on the Volga. A German Life in Russia). Verlag Steinkopf, Stuttgart. 304 pages. Cloth. RM. 4.80.

This book merits a reference in these columns because the moving incidents with which it deals bring home the theme of the Oxford Conference in all its full and fateful significance. Written though it is in the life-blood of the Volga German who lost his home in the storms of the Russian revolution, the book is in no

way "anti-Bolshevist literature". It is not, in fact, a political book at all in the narrower sense of the word, and it is all the more telling in its effect on that account.

Mulert, Hermann : *Konfessionskunde. Die christlichen Kirchen und Sekten Heute.* (Confessional Life and Thought. The Christian Churches and Sects Today). 477 pages. Paper bound RM. 10.75. Cloth : RM. 12. 50. Töpelmann, Berlin 1937.

Even though a book of this kind on confessional life and thought necessarily deals first and foremost with the distinctions between the main Christian types of faith and church, the oecumenical movement must be grateful to the author and publisher for bringing out a second edition in the very year of the great oecumenical conferences, especially as the book is consciously written from an oecumenical angle and has been newly revised. The clear and unambiguous presentation of the essential differences in faith, doctrine and constitution of the various churches in no way deters the author from seeking at the same time and all the time to discover genuine points in common. He describes with vital insight and reality the great struggle to build up the Christian faith in the first centuries of church history, on which attention is specially focused today. Of particular importance to all collaborators in the oecumenical movement will be the keen analysis of the main aspects of the dogmatic doctrinal construction of the Roman Catholic Church, which is discussed in comparison with the corresponding developments in the Orthodox churches and in Protestantism. The progress of Christian thought and action in relation to worship, piety and ethics is considered in the history of its development right up to the most recent times.

Die Kirche Jesu Christi und das Wort Gottes : Ein Studienbuch über das Word Gottes als Lebensgrund und Lebensform der Kirche. Edited by W. Zoellner and W. Stählin. Furche Verlag, Berlin, 1937.

This oecumenical study book is an outcome of the preparations for the Edinburgh World Conference of Churches. It belongs, however, no less to the oecumenical exchange of thought which developed in connection with the preparations for the Oxford Conference, in so far as its contents deal in particular with the question of the revelation of the Will of God, and with the question of the nature and task of the Church. Both questions have stood and still stand in the forefront of all oecumenical study work, for, as Dr. Zoellner himself points out, Oxford and Edinburgh, the Stockholm and the Lausanne movements, belong together, and the more thorough-going the effort, in the events of our day, to shape everything from below, to build up the world from the world and for the world, the more clearly is the Una Sancta called into the realm of that fellowship which lives on revelation from above and which seeks to shape the world from it.

To give clarity and guidance for the fulfilment of this task of the church, such is the purpose of the contributions to this book from Lutheran and Reformed, Orthodox and Anglican churchmen, from Germany, France, Sweden, England and Switzerland, in papers revealing a keen understanding of the Word and of the way to preach it and administer it. This book sets out to counteract the many dangers that threaten today : the danger of rationalistically reducing the Word of God to a mere form of supernatural communication ; the danger of so emptying church services of their meaning that they become simply an occasion for religious instruction or moral admonition ; the danger of slipping into a purely subjective piety without creed and without responsibility ; the danger of levelling Christianity down to general religious feeling which finds no contact with the personal God and knows neither the voice of God nor the responsibility of man.

Revelation. With contributions by Bishop Aulén (Sweden), Professor Karl Barth (Switzerland), Professor S. Bulgakoff (France), Fr. M. C. D'Arcy (England), T. S. Eliot (England), Professor Walter M. Horton (U. S. A.), W. Temple, Archbishop of York, edited by Professor John Baillie (Scotland) and the Rev. Hugh Martin, London, 1937, Faber and Faber.

Here is another volume which, as the list of contributors shows, has been assembled as a result of oecumenical discussion and study in connection with the world conferences of Oxford and Edinburgh and in preparation for the coming world conference of missions. We plan to review it in detail in our next issue.

Le Jardin Enchanté. Illustrated stories collected or written by Anna Jézéquel, late secretary of the Education Commission of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches. 1937. 222 pages. Obtainable from the French Council of the World Alliance, 47, rue de Clichy, Paris.

The death of Madame Jézéquel last year deprived the World Alliance of one of its most active collaborators and its education commission in particular of a source of energy and inspiration, as is evident from this volume issued under its auspices for children of from eight to twelve years of age. Several of these stories have been translated into a number of languages and have met with remarkable success among children of different nationalities and races, in whom they have helped to inculcate a spirit of love and understanding for other nations. We heartily recommend this volume, for the spirit and tone of its contents and for the educational initiative which it represents in the sphere of world friendship.

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